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The Second Part of the Athenians no Noble Bereans: Being an Answer to the Athenian Mercury, the Fourth Month, called June, in behalf of the People called QUAKERS.

YOU were certainly very much in haste when you pour'd out such a Mouthful of Charges upon a poor People, that one half of them made good, must needs lay them as low as you wish; But they that count so quick usually reckon without their Host, and must count again; as indeed you do; for in an after Mercury, you retract some of your Charges; which shews, by the way, you went without Book in making them. To spare you, and save Paper, we will not repeat them here together, but as we answer them: for they are both foul and foully given.

Your first Charge is, *We speak contemptibly of the Bible*: But we hope not. Your Assumption has four parts of proof. 1. *We own it not*, you say, *as an adequate Rule of Faith and Manners*. For this you cite R. B.'s *Apology*, p. 25, & 43. And what you cite is true; but you cite not all, and so leave what you cite more open to exception, which is by no means fair. Love but Truth and Ingenuity more than you love your own Credit, or slight ours, and we shall not doubt the Issue, even in your own thoughts. R. B. tells you wherein the Scripture is not a Rule in all cases and circumstances, viz. it was not Paul's to go to Jerusalem, to be shut up there, rather than go back to preach to the Churches in Greece: Nor the Rule of Paul's Call, nor any Minister of Christ to the Ministry; Nor with reference to their going to this or that Nation to preach the Gospel rather than any others. It is not a Rule to Prophecy as to when and/or, what at one time or point more than another; for tho' it says, 1 Cor. 14. *That all may prophesy one after another, as it is revealed to them*, which authorizes the practice, yet it is not the Rule of those motions of the Spirit; neither to the Party moved to speak, nor to those that hear to judge aright: for no Scripture can tell me if I am moved by the Spirit of God or my own Spirit, or a transformed Spirit; nor can those that hear, judge of it but by the Spirit of Truth. So that tho' the Scripture be a Rule of Words, it is the Spirit only that is a Rule to mens Spirits concerning the Rise of true Prophecy in any. Again, what Chapter or Verse can you tell you are believers? for tho' there are divers can tell what a believer is, yet how do you know that you are such? By what Rule do you apply Scripture, nay, by what Rule do you believe Scripture? for the Scripture cannot be the Rule of your belief of it self: And therefore it is that R. B. in our Name, says they are not the principal Ground of all Truth and Knowledge, nor yet the primary adequate Rule of Faith and Manners: But, says he, *being a faithful Testimony of the first Foundation, they may be well esteemed a secondary Rule and subordinate to the Spirit, from whence they have their excellency and certainty*, p. 38. And can you call this contemning of the Scriptures, without speaking contemptibly of the holy Spirit that gave them forth? He argues thus: *If the Spirit only gives the Knowledge of God, and by the Spirit we be to be led into all Truth, then the Spirit and not Scripture is the Foundation of all Truth, and the primary Rule: But the first is true: therefore also the last. Again, That which is not the Rule of Faith to believe the Scriptures, is not the primary adequate Rule of Faith and Manners: But the Scripture is not nor cannot be that Rule; therefore, &c.* p. 38, 41, 42. You shew your selves too Mercurial, and ride Post over our Arguments, leaving them and the matter behind you. The Scripture you oppose to all this, 1 Tim. 3. 17. and which is all you answer, and enough too were it but to your purpose! proves only, *that all Scripture by Inspiration from God is profitable*; but it does not say, it is sufficient of it self for the accomplishing of the man of God to every good Work; so is Preaching, Praying and Meditating profitable: but it does not say, that it is the Fountain of all true Knowledge, and the only Rule of Christians, or a Rule in all particular Cases that may occur to men: And it is plain the Apostle refer'd to the care of a Pastor, and not to all particular occasions. Lets does he say, that the Spirit is not the Rule of Christians; and if it be a Rule at all, it cannot be a subordinate one to the Scriptures that came from it: No doubt but they are profitable, very profitable; and blessed be God for them; but must we contemn them unless we prefer them to the Spirit of God? the great and most excellent Rule of Christians, Jo. 14. 26. *The Comforter shall teach you all things*. Ch. 16. 13. *The Spirit of Truth will guide you into all Truth*. The Apostle commended the Church to the word of God's grace, which is inward, Acts 20. 32. See 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10, 11, 12. which place attributes all Divine Knowledge to the Spirit of God, its Searchings and Revelations. Again, Tit. 2. 11, 12. & 1 Jo. 2. 20, 27. *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. It abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is Truth and is no Lye: and even as he hath taught you, ye shall abide in him*. We will close with the words of Christ, whom all are to hear and prefer. Jo. 5. 37, 40. *Search the Scripture (or ye search the Scripture) for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life; and they are they which testify of me. And (for all that) ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life*. A most severe rebuke to the better Jews of his time; and as great a one to the Christians of that stamp now. They valued the Scriptures, but undervalued the Messiah when he came, that, from Scripture, they lookt for: What blindness was theirs, that knew him not by so many Marks as they gave of him, but turned the Scripture against him that testified of him? This is the Case of our Opposers with us at this day: They oppose the Scriptures to Christ the Word, that shines in the Heart, and will not come to him, the quickning Spirit, in themselves, that they might have Life; but think, by them, to have Eternal Life, and they are they that testify of him. *Know ye not your own selves*, says the Apostle, *how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates*, 2 Cor. 13. 5.

This is the Doctrine that is our Crime, our Enthusiasm, our Error; and we are Seducers, Deceivers, and what not, for asserting, recommending and pressing it. But if this be to be vile, we are like to be more vile; for we must bear witness to that which the Scriptures testify of, viz. the Spirit, and prefer it before the Scripture, when the latter does so to it self. No man's Letter is himself, nor so noble as the Spirit. The Scripture is as the Letter or Epistle of the Holy Ghost, but for that reason 'tis not the Holy Ghost, nor to be

instead of the Holy Ghost to us; nor to be set up to be preferred before the Holy Ghost. We bless God for the Scriptures: we read them with comfort and advantage; and we are profitable to the perfecting of the Man of God through the Scriptures: The Scriptures declare the things of God; but cannot work them in Man: The Spirit only can do that; for which cause we honour, exalt and prefer the Spirit, as that which fulfils the Scripture, and invite all to receive it, that it may make people spiritual; for *to be spiritually minded is life and peace*. Wherefore, as often as any of our Expressions are construed to lessen the holy Scriptures, we ask it as a piece of Justice from all our Readers, to take this caution with them, we speak comparatively, not with our Books, or with Men, but with Christ, his Light and Spirit, from whence the Scriptures came. And in this sense it is that R. B. and others, on the like occasion, express themselves, when supposed to abate of the common Opinion of the Scriptures. For as *Face answers Face in a Glass*, so we say, and know, the Spirit and Scripture answer each other. And therefore the comfortable Evidence of a Christian man, is the Testimony of the Spirit of God within him, and the Scriptures of Truth without him. Let it not then be any more a fault in us to direct People to the Spirit of God, by which only they can come to the Possession of the Good things the Scriptures speak of; for tho' they Exhort, Rebuke, Instruct, &c. yet without that great Agent, the Spirit, influencing and enabling the Creature, he shall never experience the Truth of the Scriptures to himself in the most relative and excellent parts of it.

2. The second part of your Assumption is, *That we deny the Scriptures to be Necessary*; for which you cite S. Fisher, Rusl. p. 112. and R. B. Ap. p. 68. It looks gross, as you lay it down; but pray take it all together: They cannot be absolutely necessary to salvation, where God has not made it necessary that they should be at all; for then that would be necessary which is not; and People, for ever miserable, for want of that which is not their fault, that they have not. Again, It is allowed among Protestants, that where the Scriptures or Sacraments are withheld from People, as under confinement, or providentially in Infidel Countries, there an upright desire or intention answers and supplies that want: then they are not absolutely necessary: So every where, by consequence, where they cannot be had, they cannot be absolutely necessary to salvation. This is not to render the Scriptures useless or needless, or to raise an indifference to them where they are enjoyed, by no means; they are a great Blessing, and as such, to be highly prized; and no man, that has any fear of God, or the least taste of his goodness, but must be of that mind; but to vindicate God's mercy and goodness from leaving so great a part of the World without the means of Salvation, as they must be that want the Scriptures, if they are absolutely necessary to Salvation. To end this Head, consider, 1st, How long the World was without them. 2dly, How few and particular the first Books were; and, at last, in how narrow a compass all the Old Testament Writings lay, compared with the whole World. And, lastly, How many Churches were gathered by the Apostles before the New Testament Scripture was all in being, which is so much more beneficial, proper and advantageous to Christians, both as to Faith and Worship, than that of the Old Testament. And yet without that, for several years, in which time, doubtless, many fell asleep, they lacked no Rule: They had that which was sufficient, viz. the Grace of God, which taught them and led them in the way to Blessedness.

Your third Proof. *Is our equalling Apocrypha with Scripture*, and quote S. F. Rusl. p. 77. But if we don't equate Scripture with Apocrypha, it does not shew we slight the Scripture, to have more of it than ye allow that Title to: Did we make the Scripture Apocryphal, you had hit the Mark, in your sense thereof.

However, first, your Communion frequently use it to confirm their Doctrine, both in Pulpit and in Writing; and particularly the present Archbishop in his late Sermon before the Queen, upon Psal. 73. 25. and that with a more than common Emphasis. And if it were Spurious and a By-blow, as you are pleased to call us in respect of Religion, why should so many eminent Poets of your own choice to vouch the Truth of Religion from those Books, rather than Psal. Philo? &c.

3. Remember, if you please, that they were first left out by the Council of Laodicea, which was 364 years after Christ, and received again by the Council of Carthage, An. 399. which at the best is but an indifferent Foundation for your Exception. Also pray take along with you, the Complaints of Jerom and Epiphanius, among others, of the Partialities that had been even, by the Orthodox, committed upon the New Testament, under pretence of the ill use some Hereticks (real or supposed) made or might make of them, Jer. ad Luc. Epist. 28. - Epip. in Anc. 7. 2.

4. Your fourth part of the Assumption to prove your Charge, *Is that we equal our own Writings unto the Scripture, and that it is the ready way to make it both Blasphemy and Nonsense*: And from thence you are pleased to call us God's Ape. Waving all your Reflections, that edifies very little, and cannot honour you, pray observe your Proofs. G. Fox, Myst. p. 12. and Fr. Houghil, Anti. Volum. defeated, without a Page, affirm the necessity of an Infallible Spirit for Gospel-Ministers. O Friends! whether would you drive things? What, make that Heresy which is the Root of all true Religion as well as true Ministry? Can a fallible Spirit bring People in to the Truth, or turn them to God? Is not the Spirit of God an infallible Spirit? And are not the Children of God led by it? Rom. 8. 14. And we are not ashamed to say, That by that holy Spirit, we are often constrained to exhort, rebuke and instruct, as it giveth utterance; and that God has owned our Labours with a comfortable Harvest, blessed be his Name: But for equalling our Writings with Scripture, we have no such Expressions or Thoughts: It is a Word of your own, and a Conceit and Inference of our old Adversaries. There are degrees as well as diversity of Manifestations and Operations, but the same Lord, and the same Spirit: Yet if it will satisfy you, we have ever preferred the Bible to all Books, and

and Writings of Saints and good Men. You have other Proofs: You say, that *G. Reff. writ to O. C.* Thus sayeth the Lord, And that brandish'd Blasphemer Naylor (whom we, you say, to this day imitate, defend and admire) says in his love to the Lost, The word of the Lord to his beloved City; tho' the holy Scripture must not have that Honour. Now, know ye, if ye please, that we own the Style, and bless God his word is among us, and when it lays a necessity upon us, we can say in truth, *The Word of the Lord*: And it is or ought to be well known to this Nation, that we have spoken it in Truth; it having been fulfilled more than once upon those to whom we have been sent with it. And it is a Blindness and a thick Apostacy that has overtaken such as count it monstrous to have a Vision, or to know the Word of the Lord in Gospel-days. The days of Light and Life, the dispensation of Spirit and Power, and of the Word of that Lord, according to the notable passage, *Isa. 9. 21.* As for me, this is my Covenant with them sayeth the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee (speaking of Christ) and my words which I have put into thy Mouth shall not depart out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seeds Seed, sayeth the Lord, from henceforth and forever. Also that of *Joel 2. 28.* In the latter days I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh; without respect to Nation, Age or Sex. But you are very disingenuous to thrust into your Citation of *J. Naylor's* words, by Parenthesis, whom you say we imitate, defend and admire; thereby suggesting, that we defend him in Blasphemy; which is more than you can prove by any warrantable Authority: However hereby you justify that piece of Cruelty, done in that unhappy Age and usurped Power (as you suggest) which many eminent and sober People were grieved at: This is abusive, and out of all bounds of equal Dealing, and we wish you may repent of it: For we are so far from imitating, defending and admiring him in that respect, wherein he gave occasion of offence and stumbling, that we did not only at that time disown his Proceedings, but he very solemnly condemned them himself, which was printed to the World; and he lived an humble, contrite and exemplary Life, and dyed, we believe, in Peace.

That we read our own Epistles in our Meetings and not the Scriptures, is not from disrespect to the Scripture, but because of a particular occasion, and a word of Exhortation thereby communicated. If it were customary to read our Friends Writings, as the Scriptures are in the publick places of worship, and yet did not read the Scriptures, we should deserve your reproof; but that is not the Case, far be it from us.

The last part of your Assumption, by which you would prove us to condemn the Scripture, is our using, with the Papists, derailling Expressions, as a dead Letter, a Nose of Wax, a Lesbian Rule; and for this you quote *S. F. p. 48.* It is low with you that you have no more Evidence. But now be Ingenious, can you think we call the Scriptures so, or that we say Men make them so, or use them so? Lay your Hands upon your Hearts and think again, is there any thing more proverbial than to say, *That Men make a Nose of Wax of the Scripture*? But therein to joyn us with the Papists is still more uncandid; for the very place you cite makes an Exception to the Papists practice, who use such Speeches Tauntingly, that is, in slight, in contempt of the Scripture. Then *S. F.* doth it not in any such sense; why then should you make him do it Tauntingly and with Papists, when he so particularly provides against them both? You'd make ill Jury-men with such Latitudes. The Scripture of it self is a dead Letter, for all Letters are so in themselves, and you grant as much in speaking of the word of God; but if they are made alive to any Soul by the application of God's holy and quickening Spirit, they become living to that Soul, as much as if the holy Penman had spoke them in his Ear; and indeed no words are living to any Man, whether writ or spoken, but as they are made so by the Spirit in the Heart of such a Man. But *Greg. Naz.* That we suppose you reverence, speaking of the Bible, said, *Is Religion placed in a Leaf? Fearest thou (Paper or) Parchment more than God?* This had been Hainous in us, and yet it is true. A Lesbian Rule he styled it *ad Hominem*. The truth they declare is stable and certain, but Men twist, shift and wring them, and so they become like the Lesbian Rule that served all turns; and for that reason he urged, that Men should come to the Spirit of God, to receive the mind of the Spirit in the Matter therein doubted or controverted.

Your second Charge is, *That the Quakers will by no means allow the Scripture to be the word of God.* If you had said in no sense too, you would have gone too fast; and yet your Intention in your words looks that way. Let us not differ, pray you, more than needs must, to support the credit of your Charge. You confess Christ is called the word of God, but so is the Scripture. And we say Christ is, but so is not the Scripture: You produce, *Jer. 36. 4, 10, 12.* We say, at that rate, there are an hundred Words of God; because it was the Style the Prophets used for every Message. But you go, I confess, a great way to help out the Matter, when you allow, *That it is ridiculous to say the very Letters are the word of God, but the sense and divine Truths therein contained and conveyed to us by the cooperation of God's Spirit*: For in that sense, every Passage thereof given forth by divine Inspiration, is the Will, the Command, and if you please, so far, the word of the Lord; and we do not, as you say, contradict our selves in using the same Phrase in our own Writings. But nevertheless primarily and excellently we attribute that Style to Christ the Word, *that was with God, and was God, and made all things*; and we do not see but you yield it to us. For your third Charge, of turning the sacred Truths of Scripture into mere Allegories, since you refer your Proof to another place, we also our Answer.

Your fourth Charge is, *That we speak not very honourably of our Saviour.* But how does that appear? Do we say he is no Saviour, or that is a deficient Saviour, and leaves Men as bad as he finds them, as many shew that call him so? And which is worse, plead to be so as long as they live, because, say they, *He did not come to take away the cure of Sin*, which must be left for their probation, and to shew the God's Mercy to forgive; as if Sin were Serviceable? We have

not thus dishonoured him I hope. How is it, pray you, that we dishonour him? Why, 1st. You say, *We make him a Monster*: That's bad indeed, of you are very Irreverent, as well as Unjust in your Expression. *Rob. Barclay, p. 306.* you tells us, says, *He has two Bodies.* Suppose so; one you grant: The other *R. B.* calls *Vehiculum Dei*: Not two Bodies of the Virgin Mary: How is it a Monster then? You are more Mercurial than exact. But pray consider, and better late than never: Did not all the Fathers feed of Christ as well as drink of him, do you think? Read *1 Cor. 3. 4.* *They did eat the same Spiritual Meat, and did all drink the same Spiritual Drink*: (For they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.) Now the word Body is figuratively used, as it imports a Substance, that is, the Food of the Saints, their Spiritual Nourishment and Subsistence. You should be more deliberate, and not so wild and adventurous in your Censures. Your second Reason is, *That we say Christ is actually present in every one of our own Bodies*; which you say is a greater Degradation to him than his lying in a Manger. But still we see you don't read the Bible, or remember what you read. Peruse *2 Cor. 13. 5.* *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves: Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* So that what you make a dishonour to Christ, the Apostle makes an evidence of being in the Faith. But this is not the only point in which you differ. Yet know that Christ being in our Body, is none of our Phraise, and shews, as in other Charges (and which you Ingeniously own in your 3d Mercury) that you imperfectly know our Principles, tho' you boldly censure them. But were it so, yet the Apostle had defended the Expression, who speaking of the Divine Manifestation of Christ, and God in Christ, in the Creature, saith, *And this Treasure have we in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us, 2 Cor. 4. 6, 7.* To this add that of Christ's Prayer, *Jo. 17. 23.* *I in them and they in me*; and it is to be hoped you will think a Man a little better than a Manger, and yet it is no Degradation of Christ to say he is where he says he is, and where it is Antiscriptural to say he is not. Your last Reason for our dishonouring of our Saviour, is our denying him to be distinct from the Father. But suppose it were true, why do you strain so hard to depress us? Pray what were the dishonour of it? It might, on our parts, not look so current; but to make the Son the Father, is dishonouring the Father rather than the Son. You had better not be meddling, and letting us work alone; it is not your Talent, and ill becomes you. However, know, if you please, we do think the Son distinct from the Father for Fatherhood and onship are certainly not the same. And the very place you cite of *R. B. p. 87, 88.* you produced to prove your first Reason tells you enough of that. Now for the Citations out of *Ed. Burrough's Trump. p. 17.* and *J. Parnell's Shield, p. 30.* they mean no more than this, That we should not satisfy our selves only with what Christ did, and the Saints enjoyed so long ago. But that we should know and feel him by his Light and Spirit nearer to us, that we might evidence his work in our Hearts, and be Partakers of the Experiences of those blessed Saints in Light: And not that we denied or slighted that blessed Manifestation of the Son of God in the Flesh. This we have said again and again upon occasion. *Isa. Pennington's words, Quest. p. 33.* is defended by express Scripture. See *Heb. 10. 5, 7.* *A body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the Volume of the Book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.* The Body, that was of us, was not he, but his; and if Christ dwells in his People, as many Scriptures express, the body cannot be Christ, in a strict sense, because it cannot dwell in them. And therefore the Absurdity that is flung at us, in reference to our Use of that Expression, returns upon them that have so gross a conception of Christ and his dwelling in his People. You will have us confound God and his Saints, from a Passage in *G. F.'s Mystery. He is deceived, that saith Christ is distinct from his Saints.* The Page is not quoted, but we know the place. We suppose it is a misprinting gives you that apprehension; *Distinct for Divided*; they are distinct, but not divided. And this is that which was intended. You are too ready to catch and mistake also when you oppose *G. F. Jun.* to *R. B.* One calling the Light, God, the other, the Spiritual Body of Christ. For he who is the Light is God, and the Light is the Appearance and Manifestation of God. You take it ill, that we should allow the Light within to be Christ, and not the Man that died at Jerusalem to be God or Christ in a proper sense; they are your own words.

Indeed you are very ungarded in your Expressions. Nor, say you, so much as Christ in a proper sense: We don't understand you. Would you have any thing die but the body? You deny the Soul's sleeping, and fallily make it a Principle of ours, with the addition of a Socinian Dream. If not, then ye say Christ died, as we say, since that was the body of Christ that died. You dream of our Idolizing one another from this Principle of Christ being in Men. But take it from us, as you ought in justice, what we believe, and not from Enemies, that seek advantages, and screw, wring and pervert our words, that we abhor such Practices. But you have three Evidences, that, as you think, cannot fail you.

1. That many of us worship Naylor. Just as much as we worship Francis Bugg or You. But his we know, that your many, were a few, and yet too many, giddy Men and Women; and that their Actions were denied by us, and by themselves at last.

Your second Proof, as you pretend, is *J. Coal's* words in a Letter to *G. F.* And your last Proof, which doubtless you think your best, is a Passage in a Letter of *J. Audland's* to *G. Fox.* But all, were these Letters are, you do not tell us, nor give us any sufficient Authority for them, nor for the Truth of your Copies; which, upon so high a Charge, should, in common justice, have been done.

2. Besides, they are given us in *Fractions*, and *Agcs.*, as appears by your Breaks, and that is also unfair. For might not they write to *G. F.* and yet fall to pray and praise God occasionally also. A thing frequent in Religious Correspondencies.

3. But if it were a fault, must it include a whole People? Was it Writ to them, or Printed by them? Be just.

4. Is it their Practice? if not, you are to blame; and if it be, you must certainly have more Instances, and fresher than *J. A.* who has been decaft almost 30 Years. But this shews your Uncharitableness, that any thing, at any time, or at any hand shall serve you to back your unwearied and unreasonable Charges against us.

5. And we believe *J. A.* was too good a Man to intend *G. F.* in that sense you take it, and *G. F.* to accept it, whole Labour was to turn the Eyes of People from Man to Christ, which lays the Axe to all humane and creaturely Exaltation. And *G. F.* lived a true Example of Humility, and abominated all such appearances of evil. And they that ever saw or heard him Pray, would not think he should like being any ones Idol, since above all men, he appeared to express the profoundest reverence to God and Christ in Prayer; as strangers, to him and us, have occasionally observed and declared. And as he lived he died, in Care for nothing but the Glory of God, and the Exaltation of the Kingdom of his Son in his People; and, as it was said of David, he left us in a Good Old Age, full of Days and of Durable Riches and Honour.